

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 TRSE-00 /058 W
-----060930Z 080553 /17

P R 060753Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 548
INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 4326

E.O.11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINT, SP
SUBJECT: A MID TERM APPRECIATION OF THE GOVT'S LATEST PRIVATE POLL
DATE

1. EMBOFFS TALKED WITH THE GOVT'S CHIEF POLL TAKER FRIDAY, JUNE 3, WHO GAVE US A PARTIAL READING ON HIS MID TERM POLLING IN RESPECT TO THE CORTES ELECTIONS. NATIONWIDE THEY TOOK AN ENORMOUS SMAPLE (30,000). OUR INTERLOCUTOR, A RESPECTED SOCIAL SCIENTIST, FELT THEY HAD MADE A GOOD EFFORT AT STRATIFICATION, BUT IT ALWAYS POSSIBLE THAT THE SIZE OF THE SAMPLE MIGHT SIMPLY MULTIPLY ERROR. HE HAD READINGS ON 10 PROVINCES, INCLUDING MADRID.

2. IN MADRID, THERE WAS A CONSIDERABLY HIGHER PERCENTAGE OF VOTERS WHO HAVE ALREADY MADE UP THEIR MINDS BECAUSE OF THE AMPLE DISSEMINATION OF POLITICAL INFORMATION HERE. THE MADRID RESULTS WERE:
74 PER CENT OF THE ELIGBLE VOTERS HAVE MORE OR LESS MADE UP THEIR MINDS, LEAVING 26 UNDECIDED.
40 PER CENT WOULD VOTE FOR THE SUAREZ-LED UCD.
17 PER CENT WOULD VOTE FOR FELIPE GONZALEZ'S SOCIALIST PCOE.
ALL THE REST FELL BELOW 10 PER CENT WITH BOTH THE FRAGA-
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LED ALIANZA POPULAR AND THE COMMUNISTS (PCE) AT ABOUT 6 PER CENT.

3. IN THE OTHER PROVINCES, THE SUAREZ COALITION LED IN ALL BUT ONE (THE THREE-SEAT DISTRICT OF TERUEL, WHERE ALIANZA POPULAR LEADER CRUZ MARTINEZ ESTRUELAS WAS VERY POPULAR). AT THE SAME TIME GIVEN THE LARGER NUMBERS OF UNDECIDED IN THESE OTHER PROVINCES, THE CENTER STRENGTH WAS

LOWER. IN CONTRAST THE AP STRENGTH WAS SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER THAN IN MADRID, SO MUCH SO THAT IF THESE RESULT WERE REPEATED THE FRAGA-LED GROUP MIGHT ACTUALLY RUN AHEAD OF THE PSOE NATIONWIDE.

4. THESE RESULTS, HE SUGGESTED, IF THEY HELD GOOD THROUGH THE ELECTIONS WOULD EASILY GIVE THE CENTER A CLEAR PLURALITY OVER ITS NEAREST RIVALS, BUT THEY WERE NOT SUFFICIENT TO ASSURE SUAREZ A WORKABLE COALITION. CONSEQUENTLY, THE DECISION HAD BEEN MADE TO HAVE SUAREZ GO BEFORE THE CAMERAS FOR THE UCD'S LAST TEN MINUTE SPOT ON NATIONAL TELEVISION ON JUNE 13, BECAUSE IT WAS FELT THAT ONLY A MORE DIRECT INTERVENTION OF SUAREZ WOULD ASSURE THE CENTRO DEMOCRATICO PICKING UP A PERCENTAGE SOMEWHERE IN THE 40 PER CENT RANGE. (WE NOTE SUAREZ ALSO JUST PAID A HIGHLY PUBLICIZED "COURTESY" VISIT TO UCD HEADQUARTERS.) GIVEN THE FACT THAT MOST OF THE UNDECIDED, ON AN ATTITUDE SCALE, SHOWED POLITICAL ATTITUDES RANGING FROM CENTER TO CENTER RIGHT, HE THOUGHT SUAREZ MORE DIRECT INJECTION INTO THE CAMPAIGN COULD EVEN BOOST THE CENTER'S VOTE TO 50 PER CENT BUT HE NOTED THAT EXTRAPOLATION WAS A SHAKY BUSINESS.

5. COMMENT: THIS CONVESATION SHOWS ONCE AGAIN THAT THIS ELECTION WILL BE HARD TO PREDICT WITH PRECISION, EXCEPT TO SAY THAT SUAREZ' COALITION WILL HOLD A SIGNIFICANT PLURALITY OVER THE OTHERS, AND JUST AS IMPORTANT, WILL LEAD IN MOST PROVINCES, GIVING IT AN ADVANTAGE THROUGH THE WORKINGS OF THE D'HONDT PROPORTIONAL SYSTEM (SEPTTEL) IN TERMS OF PERCENTAGES OF SEATS. WE FIND IT INTERESTING
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THAT OUT INTERLOCUTOR SHOULD COUNTER THE NOW WIDELY PREVAILING NOTION THAT THE PSOE WOULD RUN AHEAD OF THE AP. THE COVERSAION AGAIN SUGGESTS THAT OTHER SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL FORCES (CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND COMMUNISTS) WILL NOT DO VERY WELL.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC OPINION POLLS, ELECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 06-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977MADRID04326
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770200-0736
Format: TEL
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770688/aaaacyse.tel
Line Count: 102
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: ca453984-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2264923
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: A MID TERM APPRECIATION OF THE GOVT'S LATEST PRIVATE POLL DATE
TAGS: PINT, SP
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/ca453984-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009